

# **Willow Creek C&H Allotment 2015 Annual Operating Instructions**

Salmon-Challis National Forest  
Lost River Ranger District  
PO Box 507  
Mackay, Idaho 83251

Approved By: /s/ Diane L Weaver 5/14/2015  
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Accepted By: /s/ Gordon Fulton 4/29/2015  
Dickey Livestock, Gordon Fulton Date  
Permittee

/s/ Jake Johnson 5/9/2015  
Rena Ranch, Jake Johnson Date  
Ranch Manager

**Please sign and return this page to the above address**

## Willow Creek C&H Allotment 2015 Annual Operating Instructions

Below are your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Willow Creek Allotment. This AOI addresses Forest Service administered lands within the Willow Creek Allotment. Please review your Term Grazing Permit for grazing utilization, range improvement maintenance, and salting standards. The Willow Creek allotment is cooperatively managed with BLM lands. Actual on-dates and off-dates are dependent on range readiness and when allowable use standards are met. The Forest Service may approve changes to the grazing rotation in consultation with the permittees to address range condition situations that may occur due to weather related circumstances.

### Permitted Cattle Authorized

| <u>Permittee</u> | <u>Cow/calf/Term/HM</u>    | <u>Non-use</u> | <u>Cow/calf/2015 Season/HM</u> | <u>Brand</u> |
|------------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Dickey Livestock | 108 6/1-9/30 <b>433 HM</b> | 0              | 108 7/7-9/30 305               |              |
| Rena Ranch       | 126 6/1-9/25 <b>485 HM</b> | 0              | 140 7/6-7/25 92                |              |

### Grazing Unit Rotation

#### **Dickey Livestock**

|                |    |           |
|----------------|----|-----------|
| BLM Seeding    | 49 | 5/18-7/6  |
| Poison Springs | 40 | 7/7-8/15  |
| Double Springs | 46 | 8/16-9/30 |

### Estimated Days

|    |           |
|----|-----------|
| 49 | 5/18-7/6  |
| 40 | 7/7-8/15  |
| 46 | 8/16-9/30 |

#### **Rena Ranch**

|                |    |          |
|----------------|----|----------|
| BLM            | 57 | 5/10-7/5 |
| Willow Springs | 20 | 7/6-7/25 |

### Estimated Days

|    |          |
|----|----------|
| 57 | 5/10-7/5 |
| 20 | 7/6-7/25 |

### **Total Days**

**135**

**77**

It will be important to ride the allotment frequently to keep cattle from congregating on the riparian areas in the Willow Springs Unit and once cattle have been moved to the Poison Unit to ensure they don't return to the Willow Creek area.

Dates reflect FS portions of use; BLM on date is 5/16. Normal off dates are 9/25 and 9/30 for Rena Ranch and Dickey Livestock, respectively. Dickey Livestock cattle will graze separate from Rena Ranch cattle. The allotment head months are split between 48% FS and 52% BLM. Each unit has unequal amounts of FS and BLM head months.

The NRCS SNOTEL sites across the Lost River Ranger District currently range from 64-90% of the Water Year average through the month of March. The Upper Big Lost River ranges from 70-80% of average. All indications show that cumulative drought impacts could persist or worsen this year. If this occurs the Forest Service expects that cattle may need to be moved more quickly through units and removed prior to the scheduled off date. Even when drought conditions subside there is a lag time for plants to physically recover from the stress of the drought.

**Designated Monitoring Areas(DMA's):** DMA's are used to monitor representative riparian areas within a grazing unit which establishes a record of utilization and trend. The information from the DMA is also used to plan cattle moves, determine if end of season indicators are met, and to evaluate whether current management is effective or needs to be modified. Permittee monitoring, documentation and photos are encouraged before entering and when leaving each unit.

**Allowable Use Standard:** End of season 4-inch stubble height on hydric sedges & grasses is required along the greenline of riparian areas, and 50% utilization of upland key species. A patchy or uneven use pattern along the greenline will usually result in stubble height standard being met. While adequate re-growth may occur under average growing season conditions when the unit is grazed early in the season, the opposite may be true during below average conditions. Special attention should be made to drier weather conditions. It is recommended a stubble height trigger above 4 inches be used to plan cattle moves.

The drier mesic meadows adjacent to streams and springs should be watched to ensure that 50% use is not exceeded. These meadows are of concern across the district and more focus is going to be put on use levels in these areas. While all adjacent meadows should be looked at, the drier meadows have less chance of re-growth and therefore are of highest concern. The upland annual use level of 50% should be used to manage the dry meadows and your rangeland management specialist will work with you to determine when a desired use level has been met, so that everyone understands what the meadows should look like after livestock use.

Riparian areas with greenlines dominated by Kentucky bluegrass and tufted hairgrass should also receive special attention to achieve end of season stubble height. Greenlines dominated by these plants have less bank stability than those dominated by deep-rooted plants and are sometimes in a lower state of ecological condition. They should be managed to increase the amount of stable hydric sedges, grasses, and shrubs where appropriate.

Other factors should be considered for planning cattle moves between units. These include changes in grazing behavior, such as a change in grazing preference from grasses and grass-like plants to young willows and other shrubs, large groups of cattle congregating in fence corners, at gates, or riparian areas for long periods of time.

**Cleaning Grazing Units:** Grazing units should be thoroughly cleaned of cattle to ensure allowable use standards are met. Enough time should be made to thoroughly clean the unit, in most cases 7 days is adequate. Permittees should be prepared to assist range riders in checking that the unit cleaned stays clean. Range riders should keep permittees informed of problems cleaning grazed units. Bulls should be kept with the main herd during breeding or removed from the allotment when they disrupt herd management. Frequent back-riding indicates there is a herd management problem. It is the permittee's responsibility to correct grazing management disruption due to cattle location.

**Fence & Water Improvements:** Please refer to Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit. Allotment boundary fences should be checked prior to cattle entering the allotment, interior fences should be checked at this time or before cattle enter a new unit. Existing improvements should be maintained each year before requesting new improvements.

**Weed Free Hay:** In accordance with State Law, please ensure that range riders bring hay that is certified and tagged noxious weed free.

**Grazing Fees:** The grazing fees for the 2015 season are \$1.69/head month. Your grazing fee payment will need to be received prior to turning livestock out on the National Forest. Receipt of payment could take up to 2 weeks from the date payment is sent.

**Actual Use Report:** An Actual Use Report will be mailed to you shortly before cattle leave the allotment. This form is to be completed and returned to the Lost River Ranger District two weeks after you have removed livestock from your allotment. The association President will need to provide a consolidated report with the numbers and dates when cattle entered the allotment, moved from unit to unit, when cattle were removed from the allotment. Each permittee will need to provide an individual report with dates when their cattle entered and left the allotment.

This information is used for the purpose of evaluating and analyzing: grazing allotment and grazing unit use, compliance with annual operating instructions, and planning next season's grazing management strategy. **The permittees will report actual numbers that are sent to the allotment and the Forest and BLM will calculate the use on each of the lands.**

Applications for refunds/credits for unused portions of your allotment must be requested and filed separately. Please contact our office if you need an application for refund/credit.

Questions and assistance regarding these instructions should be directed to Diane Weaver or the Rangeland Management Specialist at (208) 588-3400.